

**Memorandum of the Meeting  
Regular Study Session/Meeting  
Twenty-Seventh Town Council of Highland  
Monday, December 21, 2015**

The regular study session of the Twenty-Seventh Town Council of the Town of Highland was convened at the regular place, the Highland Municipal, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana, in the upper meeting chambers on **Monday, December 21, 2015** at the time of 7:06 o'clock p.m.

**Silent Roll Call:** Councilors Bernie Zemen, Mark A. Herak, Dan Vassar, Steve Wagner and Konnie Kuiper were present. A quorum was attained. The Clerk-Treasurer Michael W. Griffin was present to memorialize the proceedings.

*Also present:* John M. Bach, Public Works Director; Cecile Petro, Redevelopment Director; Randy Bowman, Electrical Code Inspector; Ed Dabrowski, IT Consultant (Contract); and Susan Murovic, Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals, were also present.

*Additionally present:* Thomas Crowel, President of the Crowel Agency; Dennis Cobb, P.E. of First Group Engineering; and Jeff Pintar, of Robinson Engineering, LTD., were additionally present.

**General Substance of Matters Discussed or Proposed**

1. *Thomas Crowel of Crowel Agency to Discuss the Town Multi- peril Insurance Lines for Renewal in 2016.* Tom Crowel discussed the proposal for the insurance lines of property, and the several liabilities lines for 2016. Most coverages were unchanged, but it was noted that the property values were adjusted and that the Police Station newly constructed would be added at completed value. There were some increases in the several specific premiums as shown below, but the net increase was \_\_\_\_\_ percent.

The Town Council discussed the Bliss McKnight Underwriter for the several liability lines and the high degree of satisfaction that the Town had with them in the past year.

It was noted that the proposed insurance plan would be placed on the agenda for the December 28 plenary business meeting.

2. *Discussion with Redevelopment Director the Requested Steps to Adjust some Allocation Areas to Prevent Losses owing to Decrements Rather than Increments.* The Town Council discussed with the Redevelopment Director the desired action being sought by the Redevelopment Commission to address lower collections in the Allocations areas owing to fifteen parcels being in decrement. It was noted that this occurs when the based assessed valuation established at the time that the allocation area is established somehow drops, causing decrement rather than increment.

It was noted that the Redevelopment Commission has taken its initial step and that the Plan commission has taken its order. The process, if approved, would remove the specific parcels from the current allocation area, and effectively create a new one, re-establishing the problem parcels at their lower based assessed valuation in a "new, ancillary" allocation area. There was no objection raised for placing the matter for action on the agenda for the plenary business meeting of December 28.

3. *Discussion with Jeff Pintar of Robinson Engineering regarding feasibility of seeking to create quiet zones in all the railroad crossings in Highland.* The Town Council discussed with Mr. Pintar and Mr. Bach the feasibility of establishing so-called "quiet zones" at all of the railroad crossings in Highland. Mr. Pintar was invited by

the Public Works Director to present because his engineering practice has extensive experience in this matter. Robinson has been engaged to assist with the Quiet Zone project that is underway for the CNN railroad crossing at Kennedy Avenue, south of 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue and North of Main Street.

Mr. Pintar offered a survey on the regulatory process under the aegis of the Federal Railway Administration, which governs the requirements to establish such a zone. He noted that since the zone restricts but does not totally prevent the use of railroad whistle, it creates added liability for the railroad. The costs of the required improvements are borne by the requesting municipality. Mr. Pintar noted that the most of the remaining crossings in town would require added railroad gates in addition to the median barriers.

Mr. Pintar presented a printed pictorial summary of his estimated analysis of the cost by each railroad crossing: (1) Grand Boulevard for circuitry upgrade, \$350,000; (2) Highway Avenue, installing 4 gates and circuitry upgrade, \$750,000; (3) Lincoln Avenue, installing 4 gates and circuitry upgrade, \$750,000; (4) Hart Road/42<sup>nd</sup> Street, installing 4 gates and circuitry upgrade, \$750,000; (5) 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue, upgrade circuitry, \$350,000; and (6) Main Street, upgrade circuitry, \$350,000.

The Town Council discussed the profound costs and whether any grants or other exogenous funding could be obtained. It was noted by Mr. Pintar that perhaps some money could be found based upon safety, but if the upgrade was for aesthetics alone, there was likely no funding available.

4. *Discussion Regarding the 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Fifth Street Intersection Improvement Project.* The Town Council discussed with Dennis Cobb, P.E. of First Group Engineering and the Public Works Director, noting that the two matters related to moving forward were postponed at the December 14 plenary meeting, were present to answer questions and to further explain the rationale for the project. It was noted that in addition to the improved efficiency that the added lane would provide over the current staggered, delayed queuing for each of the traffic platoons, there is also a need to deal with the environmental effects as well. The current traffic management, promotes protracted idling of vehicles which adds to additional carbon monoxide.

The Public Works Director also provided a chronological survey of the project, noting that in 2003-2004, the project was first added to the Transportation Improvement Plan of the Metropolitan Planning Organization. He further noted that in 2013, the project was allowed to proceed, and preliminary engineering was commissioned.

The Town council discussed the concerns of some over the amount of right of way that would be acquired as part of the project. Councilor Vassar expressed his reservations about the project and Councilor Kuiper indicated that he was inclined to oppose moving forward. The matter would be placed on the agenda of the plenary business meeting for action.

5. *Discussion Regarding the Unfavorable Recommendation for a Use Variance at 3801 Ridge Road, Dr. Rahmany as petitioner.* The Town Council discussed with Susan Murovic of the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals, the basis for the unfavorable recommendation. It was noted that this same matter had been similarly treated earlier in the year. Ms. Murovic suggested that financial hardship was not sufficient in the opinion of the Board. The matter would be taken up by the Town council at its plenary business meeting.
6. The Town Council and the Clerk-Treasurer discussed a proposal related to the compensation of workers in 2016. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that there were

significant increases in the operating costs associated with the new police station, such that there was a small margin for compensation changes. There was an estimated \$42,000 available from the unneeded appropriations for health insurance. Health insurance premiums were only increased by 1.5% and the final budget adopted at 5% increase. The Clerk-Treasurer presented a plan that would modify the current employees' longevity structure, allowing for a 7¢ per hour increase for workers after one year of service with increases of 5¢ per hour for each year of service. The plan would run from 1 year through 30 years of service and would provide for increases apart from any general increase.

The discussion included whether any increase would be provided for the Assistant Electrical Code Enforcement Officer. It was noted that no part-time worker was granted longevity pay. It was noted that there was no increase for the Assistant Electrical Code Enforcement officer. The Town Council suggested that the Clerk-Treasurer should prepare some change for the hourly rate for this position. The Clerk-Treasurer noted that he does not take the longevity and under his proposal he would not receive an increase. The Town Council President suggested that some change to the biweekly compensation in order to close gap between the position of Clerk-Treasurer as CFO and the highest paid department heads should be considered.

7. *Discussion of a Proposal for Compliance under the Affordable Care and Patient Protection Act regarding the need to offer health insurance to any worker who works and average of 30 hours or more per week.* The Clerk-Treasurer demonstrated the cost benefit analysis regarding the costs to the municipality of the fine for non-compliance and the cost of compliance. The Clerk-Treasurer showed that under the current count of workers who are regularly scheduled 30 hours a week, confining the plans to worker only or worker and children dependent plans, the costs to the municipality are less than the fines. The Town Council discussed whether it would be advisable to avoid the costs all together by limiting the weekly hours for part-time workers, making up the hours by hiring other part-timers.

The Town Council discussed whether such workers should simply be made full-time under the terms of the current policies of the town. It was noted that full-time workers received longevity, paid holidays, and pension benefits thereby significantly adding to costs above the increases that would be in consequence of the ACPPA. The matter would be reflected upon and perhaps taken up at the meetings in January.

8. *Discussion of a Recent Inspection of the Site of the Town Theater.* The Town Council discussed the impressions of Councilors Wagner and Kuiper gathered from an on-site inspection recently conducted by the Redevelopment Department and its recently engaged Architect. The councilors expressed concerns about the feasibility to reconstruct owing to the poor conditions of the existing building. The discussion included a concern about speaking to indiscriminately about the building until the architect's findings were offered.

There being no further business necessary or desired to be discussed by the Town Council, the regular study session of the Town Council of **Monday, December 21, 2015**, was adjourned at 8:51 o'clock p.m.

Michael W. Griffin, IAMC/MMC/CPFA/CPFIM/CMO  
Clerk-Treasurer